

**Ambassador Lawrence E. Butler**  
Statement on the Occasion of Donation of  
Equipment to MOI Human Trafficking Unit  
July 15, 2004

This ceremony today is clear evidence of the strong support of the United States to fight the organized crime scourge of trafficking in persons here in Macedonia. This support includes a series of seminars promoting interdisciplinary cooperation, work with the Ministry's Human Trafficking Secretariat, consultation with the Organized Crime unit and the delivery of equipment. In particular, the US Department of Justice--- ICITAP (Gary Bennett-present), OPDAT (Barbara Carlin-present) and FBI (Bob Clifford, Athens FBI Legal Attache - present)---has been very instrumental in providing a wide range of assistance to the suppression of human trafficking in Macedonia.

The very important work of the police is augmented by other programs supported by the Embassy. Whether it is the Embassy's new website for journalists on trafficking that will be launched August 1, support for the work of an NGO involved in trafficking through our Democracy Commission Small Grants Funds or an exchange program where police and prosecutors travel to the United States to see examples of how we handle trafficking, our support is substantial, both financially and through our firm commitment with our Macedonian counterparts like many of you here today. We know that trafficking networks foster criminality and vice versa.

I would also like to point out that the United States supports Macedonia's broader security interests in its support of other initiatives in judicial reform, police professional standards and community policing. And yet all of these programs are intertwined---as an example, present here today are some members of the ministry's new ICITAP-supported Skopje-based Community Action Team (astride their bikes)... all of whom, by the way, are recent graduates of embassy-supported training on human trafficking.

We can truly celebrate this occasion as a tribute to the fine work that *has* been done...and *will* be done...by the Macedonian authorities. The U.S. Department of State's annual TIP report issued last month recognized Macedonia as a "Tier One" country.... establishing Macedonia as a regional leader in fighting human trafficking. However, we must recognize that *past* efforts will not guarantee *future* achievements. The challenge before all of us is to demonstrate a day-to-day tenacity of purpose that combines material resources like we see here today with the more important human and organizational focus necessary to ultimately win this war. So I must close my remarks, with a challenge to us all... let's all rededicate ourselves to be part of this noble effort!

Adjourn with Minister to Cafeteria for cocktails